

**Upper Columbia-Salmon Clearwater(UCSC) District, Idaho**  
**Resource Advisory Council (RAC) Meeting**

June 18, 2003

Challis, Idaho

RAC Members in attendance: Kathy Richmond, Louise Stark, Ben O'Neal, Bryan Rowder, Bruce Brewer, Cora Patterson, Mark Taylor, David Nelson, Dan Rix.  
BLM: Fritz Rennebaum and Stephanie Snook, members of the Challis Field Office for portions of the meeting and field trips, and on 6/19, Kathe Rhodes and Alexia Cochrane

Kathy Richmond reported on meetings she has attended.

April 8<sup>th</sup> meeting in Boise with Idaho State Director K Lynn Bennett

- As requested, we looked at the sage grouse framework – large document, copy given to Doug and Ben at the last meeting.
- Discussed RAC Training – Ken Sanders was proposed
- Discussed developing RAC Annual Work Plans – what the RAC would work on
- Grazing Policy Changes –Sustaining Working Landscapes
- Proposed Grazing Regulation changes; meeting in Salmon that Ben attended. Meeting had several different stations; only about 4-5 people came through in the time Ben was there. Stephanie handed out copies of the Federal Register Notice containing the Proposed Grazing Regulations.

Washington D.C. trip in April: Fritz, three RAC Chairs, two RAC coordinators from Idaho plus other States in attendance.

- Presentation after presentation with much on weeds; since weed control plans are already implemented in many states, this was old news.
- Too many presenters, no time for comments, questions, or feedback The RAC Chairs would appreciate being asked ahead of time what/how to be involved.
- New National RAC website – to be developed; each state has websites
- Twinkle Thompson, National RAC Coordinator; agreed to meet with RAC Chairs once a year;
- Hottest issue was the nomination process – how to make it simpler, faster, better. The BLM folks there heard it loud and clear
- Southern California District RAC had immediate action taken on their nominations since they are established by Congress
- National Fire Mgmt Plan – part of our regular budget; Healthy Forest Initiative has not been funded yet; Wind Energy
- MOU with Utah re: Revised Statute 2477; Secretary Norton emphasized her desire that each State have an MOU that addresses RS 2477. Utah as an example of how they reached agreement-compromise; excludes roads in parks and wilderness. Counties would obligate themselves by taking over jurisdiction and would be responsible for taking over and maintaining the road – with no reversion to the federal govt. (Boundary Creek road). Discussed need for public access, availability of roads, conflicts.

- Potential sage grouse listing that BLM is trying to prevent- local working groups developing sage grouse habitat conservation plans – nothing specific asked of the RACs.
- RAC Chairs told the presenters from Gayle Norton on down; chairs need to assist in developing the WO agenda (redundant)
- Lynn Scarlet presented mechanics of how the DOI works, how policy is developed, budget that follows, etc. This was very good information.
- Instructed State Directors to filter down information to the RACs; allow the RACs to be involved in developing issues, and making recommendations to BLM.

The RAC Chairs also suggested meeting out West next time; use us and prepare us so we can give good recommendations.

### **OHV ISSUES for Idaho**

A RAC Subgroup was developed and a meeting was held in Boise on May 14, 2003. Comments from the RAC need to be submitted by June 30.

Dan Rix attended the meeting, along with Bryan Rowder via conference call. The meeting included seven RAC members, as well as Barry Rose & Terry Heslin from BLM. Terry outlined the Best Management Practices (BMPs).

The RAC discussed how OHV advertising promotes abuse – let's change what the manufacturers do. How can RACs help? Public messages, education, develop BMPs, Identify OHV hot spots, demonstration areas, area strategies.

The RAC developed the following information that will be sent to Terry Heslin as issues that the RAC thinks need to be addressed in the Idaho OHV Strategy.

### **EDUCATION AND ENFORCEMENT**

#### **Enforcement**

- enforce state laws
- Rangers to work in the areas
- On-the-ground presence to help educate
- Education, enforcement Coordinator
- Severe penalties for repeat offenders

#### **Signage**

- creative use of graphics to eliminate/reduce amount of text
- Strategically located signs at trail heads and include kiosks
- \$ needed to implement
- Maintenance and replacement needs to be done regularly

#### **Schools**

- Develop programs for schools/clubs, Boy Scouts, Girl Scout Councils
- Participate in field rehab with schools and clubs
- Trails Day, National Public Lands Day

Provide information on where OHVs can be used – trail guides, brochures, maps, at places like the Chamber of Commerce, trail heads, agency offices, etc.

Develop travel plans and maps

#### Manufacturing Concerns

-Provide OHV user education at time the OHV is sold – include information on riding responsibly and include information on other programs such as Tread Lightly and Leave No Trace. Include information on damage that occurs to fisheries, wildlife and other resources as well as concerns about spreading noxious weeds.

#### Education and Enforcement

- Make users register their OHVs
- Ensure that the operator takes a test and/or an education/training program regarding respecting the land, litter, etc.
- registration fees should be used to pay for maintenance of trails and enforcement
- certification requirement
- endorsement on license for OHVs or separate license for operators under age 16
- Integrate education with other classes, such as hunter education
- Integrate Tread Lightly and Leave No Trace into education programs
- Assign local (Field Office level) Coordinators for education/outreach

#### Weeds

- Require and provide vehicle wash stations
- Require use of only certified weed free livestock feed
- control weeds (spraying, biological)

Ensure protection of sensitive/special areas (springs, meadows, streams, wildlife, TES, archaeological/historical, etc.) as well as allowing some areas to be closed to OHVs (need quiet areas).

Maintain trails so users will use and enjoy them

- close and rehabilitate closed trails
- Have OHV users help with maintenance (work days)
- recognize responsibilities of all users

#### Agency Administration/Management

- Coordinate between and with other agencies and landowners to get consistency in management and enforcement
- Determine who is the lead agency for each action regarding issuance of permits, maintenance, and enforcement
- Need each agency to be able to enforce rules/regulations of other agencies

#### **FIELD TRIP:**

The RAC traveled to the new Challis Wild Horse Corrals. Lee Redick, BLM Rangeland Management Specialist, gave a presentation on the Challis horse herd and the gathering

and adoption process. Information was provided about the Wild Horse and Burro Program, including the Wild Horse and Burro Act, court mandated management of horses in the Challis area, processing of horses for a gathering/adoption, success rate of adoptions, long-term holding facilities, and cost of this program to the BLM. The RAC had many questions about the program, including the cost effectiveness. Fritz offered to get more information and have it presented at a future meeting.

The RAC and employees of the Challis Field Office toured parts of the Proposed OHV Trail. They met with ranchers who graze livestock in the area. The ranchers and staff discussed impacts or concerns regarding the proposed trail and talked about how the permittees may be affected by the increased OHV use (gates left open, livestock disturbed, range improvements vandalized, garbage, maintenance and law enforcement questions, etc.).

Rangeland Standards & Guidelines – Peggy Redick, Rangeland Management Specialist, demonstrated how the BLM measures vegetation along the streams; determine/quantify impacts to stream banks, and how stubble heights are used as a term and condition of the range permit. Discussion took place about how the S&Gs have been implemented and how they are working

Fisheries and Riparian Improvement - Drove up Herd Creek and looked at an area with riparian improvement after a 600+ head grazing permit has been reduced to 250 head (Ingram's permit). Looked at a culvert, scheduled to be replaced, that is a barrier to fish.

Meeting adjourned for the day upon arrival at the Village Inn in Challis.

### **June 19, 2003**

Meeting called to order at 8:00 a.m.

Mark Taylor presented some material he received while attending the Sustainability Forum (see attached). He learned a great deal from this forum and suggested the RAC consider helping to put on a forum next year.

Renee Snyder had previously told Kathy that the RAC could help by brainstorming how to help the community in Challis. Kathy R. would like to take information on the Forum to the Custer County Commissioners. Louise said Custer County could use some help as they will be going to a four-day school week due to the tough economy.

Mark said that Jerry Brady may be involved in putting together a Forum in Eastern Idaho (Idaho Falls?) instead of Boise. Kathy offered to contact people like Yvonne Ferrell and ask if and how the RAC can help and then come back to the RAC and see if folks are willing. The Andrus Center would probably be involved with this effort. Fritz suggested that Kathy should brief the other two RAC Chairs so we have an Idaho effort.

### **Evaluation of yesterday (6/18/03):**

**Wild Horse Program** -Several members were concerned about the high cost of keeping the wild horses; the current practice of keeping the old studs until they die; and the current law and policies. Fritz explained that there is a National WH&B Advisory Committee who reports to the Group Manager in our Washington D.C. office. Any comments that the RAC wants to provide should be given to Fritz so he can take them forward to the Idaho State Director; who will forward them to the Committee.

### **RAC Member concerns:**

These are feral animals pushing other species off the range; cost for feeding, capturing; it's not right to take the wild animals and put them in pens.

Fritz explained there are some areas where private landowners voluntarily took off their cattle and offered the ranges to the government and the govt. paid the rancher to let the wild horses run on the range. This is another expensive alternative.

Keep them at a manageable level – Louise

Adoption program has some validity

The 14-year old studs are the issue; housing and feed costs until they die is too expensive

Promotion of the WH&B program has increased; good marketing

Questioned the use of advertising if there are so many horses not adopted out

Fritz provided information to the RAC:

- K Lynn was Associate State Director in Nevada and knows a lot about horses; worked in the Palomino Valley near Reno with 3000 horses in the facility.
- Fritz will share the RACs thoughts and concerns with K Lynn; ask Tom Miles (Idaho BLM Wild Horse Program Leader) to provide information to the RAC.
- Idaho was asked to build a national holding facility – K Lynn said no; \$750,000 cost to build a facility in Boise.
- K Lynn wants to see the young stock, two to three-year olds, removed and the old stock left on the range. BLM Adoption Team holds the adoptions throughout the state.

The RAC is interested in learning the details of the program:

How much is spent for round-ups, feeding, vet care, transportation, etc. and what are the costs of the facilities that continue to hold the horses? How many horses are in holding facilities? What are the trends with adoptions (#'s adopted, how marketing is helping).

Fritz will notify Tom Miles, Jack Sept and K Lynn

The information should be sent to RAC members prior to the meeting so it can be reviewed and information provided to the RAC prior to the next meeting.

## **Challis Proposed OHV Loop**

### **Louise Stark**

She responded to one of the first scoping meetings and had two other outfitters sign the letter of concerns. They think the Idaho Dept. of Parks & Recreation (IDPR) needs to consider wildlife, weeds, dust, land values, and the existing activities on the east side of the valley (dog walking, trailer horses, joggers) in the Spring due to early accessibility when snow is in the higher elevations. The proposed trail may discourage other uses. This is already a multiple use area. She suggested that IDPR work with private landowners for easements as well as on other issues. Louise doesn't think anyone would be opposed to the economic stimulation that it would bring to the community – how much will the marketing effect this area is an unknown. Louise thinks IDPR could help gain acceptance of the proposal by identifying landowners and addressing issues such as safety due to the width of the road, identifiable space along the road with parking, wash station, and signage. Dave Stecklein, Sun Valley, suggested a smaller or scaled-down version since it is a pilot project to see what the effects are, evaluate it, community acceptance.

The proposed route is 450 miles. Concerns include distance between towns to get gas, which is 60 miles plus and a much different situation than along the Paiute Trail (18 communities along the trail), erosion, damage to the land, enforcement, noise, safety, hunters going off-road, and antler hunters.

### **Mark Taylor**

IDF&G has outlined areas of critical wildlife habitat and sage grouse leks along the trail. They have recommend disturbance to big game and sage grouse be minimized by putting a two-mile buffer around leks and/or instituting seasonal closures Nov. 1 to May 15. The second recommendation, because of the expected increase in people, is to complete an environmental analysis. IDF&G is concerned about OHV uses and conflicts, enforcement necessary; noxious weeds because they affect wildlife habitat; accelerated soil erosion and stream sedimentation; and that monitoring will also be needed to see how resources have been affected.

He said he kind of likes the idea of the OHV trail because it confines people to the trail and minimizes impacts to wildlife and private landowners and result in fewer weeds. If the rest of the area could be closed, it would be good and good for the area. The new trail will require enforcement.

### **David Nelson**

David gave an analogy to regulating bars in New Zealand. If you confine the issues it is better than having these impacts all over the place.

Foundations could provide \$\$\$\$\$ and there could be support from the environmental community because the trail would keep people out of larger areas but enforcement is the key.

Ben O'Neal

They (OHVs) are already here so let's get this going along with the enforcement.

Louise Stark

There needs to be better/more coordination with landowners to get agreements in place. Concerned about resource damage, how will the route be maintained and the resources be protected? Will there be MOU/Agreements about who does what? What about enforcement, maintenance, and weed spraying?

Bryan Rowder - Need to thoroughly outline the requirements and issues.

Bruce Brewer – The concentration of use will make it manageable where it is not now. Identify issues of weeds and enforcement; trail maintenance, find problem spots, creek crossings; also needs to be fun and challenging for all levels of riders to keep people interested.

The RAC asked Jeff Christenson, BLM Recreation Planner, if the IDF&G information on critical wildlife habitat including sage grouse leks had been shared with IDPR and BLM. He didn't think it had so another formal request will be made for IDF&G to participate. Jeff said that IDF&G only attended two of the public meetings and provided written input. Mark Taylor will email the IDF&G letter and maps to Jeff.

Kate Forster, Challis BLM Fisheries Biologist, explained the BLM's concerns, even though the route is on existing roads and trails, such as secondary effects; like people going off trail; going through wet meadows, stream crossings, increased traffic and erosion. BLM has listed concerns with the State and they are trying to identify them on-the-ground. Consultation with NOAA Fisheries will be done at some time.

**Motion** was made by David Nelson to accept the work the RAC did work on OHV summaries/categories, write them up, review, and submit them to Terry Heslin as formal comments on the Idaho BLM OHV Travel and Access Management Strategy. Seconded by Dan Rix. Motion carried.

**Motion** made by Bruce Brewer that the RAC make recommendations to IDPR to consider the comments and concerns on the Proposed OHV trail which is located on existing routes when developing the draft plan. Also provide comments to Lost River Ranger District, Challis RD, Challis BLM, and USRD RAC. Seconded by David Nelson. Motion Carried.

### **Rangeland Standards and Guidelines Review**

Kate Forster answered questions from the RAC members. Stubble standard is working but the interpretation of the trend sometimes causes BLM to reinitiate consultation. The 4-6 inch stubble standard is directly tied with the bank shearing. Grazing permits are issued on a 10-year basis with annual operating plans including monitoring; depends on record of permittee and circumstances, frequency, resource damage-very site-specific.

Price for Animal Unit Months (AUMs) is calculated annually using the price of beef and many other factors.

**FIELD TOUR** - Bill Baer led the tour to Birch Creek, an area just south of Challis, where they propose to do some prescribed burning to improve habitat for big horn sheep

1:00 Public Comment Period - no public to provide comments.

### **Land Use Planning**

Fritz introduced Kathe Rhodes and explained how Kathe and Stephanie somewhat share positions. Stephanie is the UCSC District lead for Public Affairs, stationed in Cd'A. Kathe is the District lead for Planning & Environmental Coordination, stationed in Salmon. Stephanie has responsibility for Planning & Environmental Coordination in the Cottonwood and Coeur d'Alene Field Offices, while Kathe has responsibility for Public Affairs in Salmon and Challis Field Offices.

Kathe Rhodes described the Resource Management Planning efforts taking place throughout the Bureau. For our District, we have the Challis RMP completed in 1999, the Lemhi RMP amended in 2002, and old Management Framework Plans in Coeur d'Alene and Cottonwood.

Alexia Cochrane was introduced as the team lead for completing the Preparation Plan for Coeur d'Alene and Cottonwood RMPs. She explained her involvement in the Preparation Plans. One of the key functions of the Preparation Plan is to free up money from the WO so we can do the RMPs.

The third and final Interdisciplinary (ID) team meeting will be in Moscow next week with specialists from the two Field Offices. In addition to securing funding for the RMPs, the PrepPlan identifies the budget for the RMPs, data needed, and a timeline so the WO and public know when we will finish the RMPs. Alexia handed out a DRAFT of the Preparation Plan. Public involvement will be done through use of internet technology with an interactive website.

The ID team has been working on issue identification, using questions to help focus on the problems, and developing management ideas. Alexia handed out the Draft Cd'A Resource Issues and Resources Uses.

We hope to send the PrepPlan to the BLM Washington D.C. Office in September, 2003. In FY-2004, we will start the scoping process in the winter or early next spring and hope to involve the RAC.

Fritz discussed our rationale for doing two separate plans for Cottonwood and Coeur d'Alene, instead of one. The Idaho Panhandle and Kootenai National Forests are in the process of completing a Forest Plan Revision, which is similar to our RMP process. Issues for BLM include hazardous materials, recreation; Wildland Urban Interface (WUI)



areas surrounding communities are generally BLM, the area surrounding BLM is generally FS. The FS is not looking at BLM when they do fire management planning.

BLM will share the draft NOI with the RAC and get ideas on the planning criteria.

### **Social and Economic Impacts of the Proposed Grazing Regulation Changes**

Kathe Rhodes – There has been a contract for analysis of social and economic impacts of the proposed grazing regulation changes. Aaron Harp has been contracted to help gather input from livestock interests, recreation interests, and environmental interests that will be used in the Environmental Impact Statement. Kathe asked the RAC members to suggest names of people who can provide some good input at the Focus Group meetings. A meeting date will be set in Salmon, \$40 stipend for costs of getting there, and talk about impacts to their area of interest represented at the meeting.

July 7, 8, 9, or 14 are the proposed meeting dates. Aaron will make the selection based on availability. Ben, Louise and Kathy agreed to be included on the list and the RAC will make available the notes from this meeting. Other suggestions were given to Kathe.

### **Review of Grazing Regulations and Sustaining Working Landscapes**

The RAC reviewed the proposed grazing regulation changes and discussed them. It was difficult to provide any specific feedback due to a lack of understanding of current regulations and exactly what is being proposed. We later found out the RAC is not being asked to provide comments on the Regulations changes, only on the Sustaining Working Landscapes (SWL) Initiative. The topic of SWL was tabled until more information becomes available.

### **Wilderness**

Secretary Norton proposed that there would be no new BLM lands for new wilderness study. RAC discussion:

Where is our population going to be in 20-30-40 years and where are we going to be then?

We need to look ahead.

We want to have the option to add to current WSAs.

We support the option to study new lands for wilderness and oppose the current administration's decision to not study any new areas for wilderness.

Wilderness impairment standards must continue to be met.

The areas inventoried and included as Wilderness Study Areas have been reviewed and recommendations are made, through the planning process as to which portions are suitable and recommended for designation by Congress and those portions that are not suitable and that would be dropped from further consideration. The WSAs are managed as wilderness until Congress takes the action. The Wilderness Handbook applies to the WSA inventories done before 1991; for those studied/inventoried after this, the handbook no longer applies.

Cora asked what the likelihood is of needing to add more acres to an area that was already identified as nonsuitable.

Individual RAC members will comment, as appropriate, to Secretary Norton's decision.

**Annual Work Plan**

Stephanie will send a copy of the Lower Snake River District's plan and we will discuss this in more detail at a future meeting.

Cora handed out F&WS letter restricting lawsuits. This is for information only; if anyone else wants to have it on the agenda, please let Kathy or Stephanie know.

Meeting adjourned 4:40 p.m.

Minutes recorded by Stephanie Snook, UCSC RAC Coordinator

Minutes approved November 13, 2003